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SUBJECT: CPA DAY CELEBRATIONS IN YAMBIO

¶1. Summary: On January 19, the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and Government of National Unity (GNU) hosted the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Yambio, Western Equatoria. Unlike the previous years' celebrations in Malakal and Wau, there were no reports of security incidents. GNU President Omar Al-Bashir, GOSS President Salva Kiir, Minister for SPLA Affairs Nhial Deng Nhial, Governor Gemma Nunu Kumba and others spoke positively about the need for full implementation of the CPA, free and fair elections and a peaceful transition regardless of the results of the referendum. End Summary.

¶2. On January 19, GNU officials, GOSS representatives and foreign diplomats gathered in Yambio, Western Equatoria to mark the fifth anniversary of the signing of the CPA. The speeches made by Al-Bashir, Kiir, Nhial and others were overwhelmingly positive. The event commenced with a speech by Governor Gemma Nunu Kumba who highlighted the many development, security and gender issues facing her state, Western Equatoria, as well as Sudan. She blamed the GOSS and the international community for not doing enough to rid Southern Sudan and especially Western Equatoria of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). She praised the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) for increasing the percentage for female representation to 35 percent and called on the GNU and other parties to require the same throughout Sudan. Finally, she called on the GNU to reimburse Western Equatoria for the 40 percent they owed the state for the CPA celebrations, citing their lack of reimbursement only further exacerbated underdevelopment in the state.

¶3. Minister of SPLA Affairs Nhial Deng Nhial spoke on behalf of the GOSS and stressed the importance of these CPA celebrations in the development of different states in the south. Each year the celebrations have focused on a different city in a different state to ensure development throughout Southern Sudan. Nhial went on to commend the efforts of the local government against the LRA threat. He stated that elections must be free and fair, although he fears like many that they won't be. He explained that the GOSS is committed to ensuring that the National Congress Party (NCP) is not able to disrupt elections in the south. He concluded stating that the GOSS first, second and last priority is peace.

¶4. Kiir and al-Bashir called on the population of Sudan to stay committed to CPA implementation throughout 2010. They both pledged to work together in the remaining time to ensure that Sudan is set up for a peaceful transition regardless of the outcome of the referendum. Both Kiir and al-Bashir committed to ending LRA activity in the region and offered they assistance to the people of Western Equatoria. Kiir called on the people of Southern Sudan to help consolidate peace and unity throughout Southern Sudan.

Al-Bashir said that if Southern Sudan opts for separation, "Khartoum will be the first to recognize and support the new state of Southern Sudan." However, he also added that the goal of the NCP is to secure unity for Sudan.

15. Comment: The celebration and speeches were largely positive. Al-Bashir's speech was not only positive, but surprising in how open he was on the referendum. That said, it remains to be seen whether the National Congress Party will be willing to accept the result of the elections and referendum once the votes are in.
WHITEHEAD